

## CURTAIN WALL

A wall becomes almost imperceptibly a curtain - or is that the effect of being used to read everything from left to right. Is it a curtain that almost imperceptibly becomes a wall?

The metamorphosis of WALLCURTAIN - CURTAINWALL opens a series of ambiguities which invites you to play serious and joyful games in a world of symbols, metaphors and allegories. It is also a wonderfully ironic comment upon the very real boundaries of everyday life whether they be hard or soft, psychological or physical - but at least where you can understand the connections between the words we use and the facts of life.

We all know about walls.

We know they separate, they keep something out or something in, feelings or felonies.

They are at least, by definition, impenetrable and you can force them at your peril.

We all know walls have openings - they have gates, doors and windows. Indicators of promises and fears - and possibilities of transgression.

We all know about curtains. We know they cover and cover up. They cover both the boundaries and the possibilities to cross them. We also know they can be lifted.

The WALLCURTAIN - CURTAINWALL transformation creates an imaginary space of that on the other side, which simultaneously questions which side you are on. Inside or outside - of what. It creates that which is the mark of a work of art, distance between experience and reflection - which gives room for fantasy and thought.

89A-STOKKE  
ORIGINAL

FILE: KARTVEDT  
W540/L57

Gentle Provocation  
Per Kartvedt  
1989

The material thinness of the actual installation is enough to conceal factual space and, through this, to enhance the discovery of the space between what you see and what you think you see - between image and appreciation. The sensual apprehension is confronted with the experience, and they are not the same. There is a difference, a dis-association, a rift. The rift is what unites the opposites, it establishes the open field in which the work of art, generously, gives you the world of freedom, for a frozen moment. You have to build your own bridges.

The installations work on the level related to our everyday life, a world of necessity and recognition; on another level they relate to our dreams and hopes, a world of freedom and fear.

First of all, they appeal to that part of a being which is not dependent on wisdom, to the part of us that is a gift and not an acquisition. They also create a forest wilderness of connotations which requires a conscious effort to navigate. There are a few signs to point the way.

Taken as a whole, they speak of our capacity for delight and wonder, the sense of mystery that surrounds our life; our sense of pity and beauty, and pain.

The installations are the result of endless experiments, of trial and error, until the elements of the work have been minimalized to that which is necessary, where less is more. In a very simple way they relate Time and Space and Matter.

They touch very gently your childhood memories, open up paths into history and myth. They are also painfully present here and now. They create an astonishing openness which leaves you exposed to your own feeling and

thought. They offer no help, but do so in a gentle manner. The delicate nature of the installations - they are tactile to the extent of the overpowering - lends a quietness to them. They are not polemical, never ironic, often humorous. They say something almost in passing, like a whisper about things that seem important. - if you only had a short time of space to remember what it was. They present a riddle. The task is not to solve it, but to see it. After that, you are left with ships and stars, time and space, ashes and dust, and the wind.

The StoreFront installation is the first in a series. The idea of the ship is typically lifted from the space as found, and carries with it the reference of the crossing to another realm - the land of gold and honey. On one level, the installation is about its appearance and the material used. As such, they need no words. However, its appearance reveals layers and layers of time past and time future, of reality and symbols.

The fascination of the ship is that it does not need to be built. It is a fragment, detached, lonely and swift like a small planet. It is already there, sailing the seas of your imagination, casting a shadow on the walls of the caves it moves through. A dreamship, out of space, out of time. And dreams are necessary to life.

89A-STOKKE  
ORIGINAL

FILE: STOKKE  
W582/L102

Note: This is  
not the same text  
as newsletter.  
Also, newsletter has  
already been edited.

**The Ship**  
**An Installation by Bente Stokke**  
**January 18 - February 12, 1989**

"Between the idea  
and the reality  
between the motion  
and the act  
falls the shadow"  
(T.S. Eliot)

My work  
is  
in the beginning  
a materialized consequence  
of a thought  
lifted from  
the reality  
of my daily life

the work becomes a work of art  
through its appearance  
occupies its own space  
contains its own vocabulary  
speaks its own language  
is present in its own reality

my motive for working  
lies in the uncovering  
of a space  
which reveals itself  
in shifts and layers  
of reality  
a space which

otherwise remains  
covered up

my material is ash and dust  
witnesses about time passed  
what all things become  
when they no longer are  
the impermanence  
of the material  
entails the possibility  
that the work can be  
decomposed in the process  
of its appearance  
in one moment

the work of art exists  
in an eternal present  
a frozen moment  
which contains all time  
and no time  
the frozen moment  
gives in this space  
the work takes place

? indeed

The installations are the result of endless experiments, of trial and error, until the elements of the work have been minimized to the ~~that~~ which is necessary, where less is more. In a very simple way they relate Time and ~~space~~ and Matter.

The installations start in the confrontation of a found space (sometimes a gallery) with an idea concealed within the history of the particular place. In a sense you hold up a mirror to its "genius loci." This opens for a strategy which makes each installation unique, unrepeatable. It also roots the essence to the work in the uncovering of common experiences. Hence the simplicity of themes: the Attic, the Basement, the Cave, the Window, the Curtain, the Curtain Wall, the wall, the Well and so on. Things of ~~our~~ everyday life that we can relate to.

conf?

from

The installations can be seen as part of the same continuous process. There exists a quiet conversation from one to the other, The process follows an archaic pattern": from legeia, Apofinesthai, Alethai, Poiesis, Techei, Eidos and again and again, And this not as a mystic incantation, but the result of a clear, realistic attitude where the nature of knowing consists in the uncovering of that which is hidden, the notion of idea in the installations is closer to EIDOS than the modern concept of Idea. EIDOS means both idea and appearance, that which can be made visible, placed before your eyes. An idea in this widest sense cannot be conveyed except by a symbol- that which we call art.

The essential elements of the installations are the materials- ashes and dust. In this lies the key to the world of ideas that the works relate to. The double meaning of ashes and dust, on the one hand familiar parts of every one's life, The dust and silence of the upper shelf. On the other hand, the symbol of the passing of time, of death and destruction. If ice is the silent language of the peak and fire is the silent language of the star, then surely ashes and dust are the silent language of time. And you can bring the past in a few buckets of ashes and scatter it, "And Time is a maniac scattering dust." And if in the end all is ashes and we will see heaven and earth in ashes burning, ashes and dust are what stars are made of.

For the last eight years or so, the work of Bente Stokke has centered upon a patient search for the expression of Time. Her exhibition in the Galerie Nemo, Kiel, 1982, had as its working title: "Time as Material". In the following years this has become the dominating preoccupation of her work.

The format chosen is the installation, which demands something both from the artist and the public. It has the potential of challenging and changing the established roles of artist and public. Not that this is essential. In this case the public will literally have to take care of themselves. This art is dangerous and distinctly unhealthy to touch. In addition, the nature of the work is such that it cannot be easily turned into a commodity. That in itself would require a creative effort of some magnitude.

Dear Lebbeus and Bridget!

Some weeks too late, but not too late I hope: some more documentation of recent works, plus some crits plus ~~a~~ written comments from per to be used - apart from sending it to you - as catalogue text.

I am extremely grateful for that you have undertaken the difficult task of presenting my work to galleries - without even having seen my work! - XD.

I think storefront looks like an interesting gallery ~~for~~ my work - had the review in Artforum recently - and I can only hope that K. Park will approve of the idea of seeing my work in the gallery.

The curtain/wall will be shown in Sweden this summer June → ~~Sept.~~ I'll have quite a large solo show that will travel - believe it or not, - starting in Bergen - Norway in September then another opening in Sweden October 1st. After that my engagements are a bit loosey (and can be changed around a bit..)

I am going to Copenhagen tomorrow, then Sweden and after that I am heading for the Netherlands. It is very nice working <sup>round</sup> in Europe, but it is even more exciting thinking of a possible chance to exhibit in New York!

We will meet, if not before, then at least this summer. Lots of love BENTI